

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

**SOCI 3204 SOCIOLOGY OF CRIME AND DEVIANCE**

Second Term, 2020/21  
Thursdays 4:30 – 6:15 p.m.

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The study of crime and deviance is central to the discipline of sociology. Breaking the law and rules is always controversial. We would not understand the rules of society unless we understand the rule-breakers. This course aims at examining the nature and social correlates of crime, deviance and victimization from a variety of sociological perspectives. In addition to reviewing a number of criminological theories and empirical research findings, this course is specially designed to help students critically analyze some issues of crime and deviance in Hong Kong.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

After completing the course, the students should be able to:

- 1 recognize the significance of scientific, evidence-based study of crime and deviance;
- 2 capture the role of sociological theories of criminology in understanding crime and deviance, compare their underlying theoretical assumptions, recognize their interrelationships, and comprehend how these theories reflect the historical context of the times and cultures in which they were developed;
- 3 identify and critically evaluate certain commonly-held views regarding crime and deviance, and present alternative and even opposing hypotheses on criminal and deviant phenomena;
- 4 recognize the importance of sociological analyses for reflection of the diversity of values and positions in terms of crime and deviance; and
- 5 develop practical skills of applying sociological theories to examine real life instances of crime and deviance.

**COURSE STRUCTURE**

The course will consist of (1) lecture, (2) case discussion, and (3) tutorial class (five sessions in total). It will adopt an online teaching mode via Zoom, unless otherwise announced by the University.

## **COURSE ASSESSMENT**

### 1 Group Research Reflection Project 30%

This assignment is a small-scale research project dealing with a certain aspect of crime or deviance in Hong Kong or in other societies with which students are familiar. The learning objective of the project is to help students practise how to critically assess certain issues in criminal and deviant behaviors, as well as how to apply criminological theories to the analysis of their selected issues.

Students will form groups of two or three students each. The research topic is to be decided by students. The length of the main text of the research paper should be **no more than 2,700 words in English (excluding references and appendix)**.

### 2 Tutorial class (Attendance, Presentation and Participation) 20%

Tutorial class aims to navigate students through the process of doing the group research reflection paper. Each group of students is required to submit a brief report and give presentations for each research progress. Besides, in the tutorial class, students should not just focus on their own topics. There will be an emphasis on students' participation, which will be in the form of giving ideas and comments on the presentations made by different groups. This is vital for fostering discussion and capturing ideas from different research issues in crime and deviance.

### 3 Final Examination 50%

This is a centralized examination that assesses students' theoretical knowledge on sociology of crime and deviance. It covers both lecture contents and required readings.

### 4. Case Discussion

Case discussion will enable students to garner more understanding of empirical tests on criminological theories. It will be conducted in the **Feb 4 and Mar 11 lecture sessions**. Articles will be delivered one week prior to the case discussion session. Students are required to read the cases. Attendance will be taken for each session, and 3 marks will be deducted for each absence.

## **Reminder for Online Lecture**

Students are reminded that online video recording is automatically turned on for lectures. Students when turning on their own device video/microphone agree to recording of their face and/or voice shown in the Zoom video. CUHK has the right to post the video at the Blackboard Course Contents for student revision.

In this connection, recorded lecture videos of this course will be uploaded to the Blackboard soon after every lecture. They are for students' personal study only. Public release and circulation of the recording beyond students of this course is not allowed.

## Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/> . Our Department also has a detailed guideline on academic citations <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/soc/citation.pdf>.

With each assignment, students are required to submit a signed [Academic Honesty Declaration Statement](#) that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For assignment that is principally text-based and submitted via the VeriGuide system, the Academic Honesty Declaration Statement in the form of a receipt will be issued by VeriGuide upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

## Review Session

A review session will be arranged for students to seek comments from the lecturer concerning the performance of the final examination after the University announcement of student academic results. **The review will be done by phone to the lecturer's office.** Student participation in this review is voluntary. There is no need to make time appointment. The date and timeslot of the review session will be announced in the last lecture on April 22.

The review will NOT be done through email or Zoom. Please also note that the review is NOT equivalent to grade appeal. Our Department has regulations on the grade appeal procedures and students should approach the general office of Department of Sociology for these procedures.

## Textbook and Essential References

It is optional to purchase the textbook. The textbook and essential references are reserved in the Chung Chi library.

### Textbook

Akers, Ronald L., Christine S. Sellers, and Wesley G. Jennings. 2017. *Criminological Theories: Introduction, Evaluation, and Application*. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

### Essential References

Coleman, Clive and Jenny Moynihan. 1996. *Understanding Crime Data: Haunted by the Dark Figure*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Cullen, Francis, Robert Agnew, and Pamela Wilcox. 2014. *Criminological Theory: Past to Present, Essential Readings*. 5<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

Daigle, Leah E. 2013. *Victimology: The Essentials*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Davies, Pamela, Peter Francis, and Victor Jupp. 2011. *Doing Criminological Research*. 2<sup>nd</sup>

edition. Los Angeles: Sage Publications. (Its e-book is available at the University library.)

Downes, David M., Paul E. Rock, and Eugene McLaughlin. 2016. *Understanding Deviance: A Guide to the Sociology of Crime and Rule Breaking*. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lanier, Mark M. and Stuart Henry. 2015. *Essential Criminology*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press. (Its e-book is available at the University library.)

Vold, George B., Thomas J. Bernard, and Jeffrey B. Snipes. 2002. *Theoretical Criminology*. 5<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wallace, Harvey and Cliff Roberson. 2015. *Victimology: Legal, Psychological, and Social Perspectives*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Boston: Pearson.

## **COURSE CONTENTS**

Required readings are drawn from the textbook and some essential references.

### **Defining and Measuring Crime and Deviance**

**Jan 14**     What is crime and deviance?  
                 Intellectual background of criminology

Required readings: Vold, Bernard and Snipes Chapter 1; Lanier and Henry Chapter 2

**Jan 21**     Measuring Crime and Deviance

Required readings: Coleman and Moynihan Chapters 2 & 4; and  
                         Xie, Min and Eric P. Baumer. 2019. "Crime Victims' Decisions to Call the  
                         Police: Past Research and New Directions." *Annual Review of Criminology*  
                         2: 217-240.

### **Explaining Crime and Deviance**

#### **I     Consensus Model: Theories of Structural-functionalism, Control, and Learning**

**Jan 28**     Social Strain Paradigm: From Anomie to General Strain  
                 Do modernization and class position matter in social strain causation?

Required readings: Vold, Bernard and Snipes Chapter 6; Akers, Sellers and Jennings Chapter 9

**Feb 4**     Case discussion on empirical test of general strain theory

**Feb 18**     Control Theories and Life Course Criminology

**Feb 25**     Theory of Control-Balance: Do crime and deviance result from too little control or

too much control?

Required readings: Akers, Sellers and Jennings Chapters 6 & 14

**Mar 4** Environmental Criminology: Spatial Analysis and Dynamics  
Why are crime and deviance not geographically distributed by randomization?

Required reading: Akers, Sellers and Jennings Chapter 8

**Mar 11** Case discussion on theoretical integration

**Mar 18** Learning Theories and Neutralization Theory: Criminals and deviants are not born

Required readings: Akers, Sellers and Jennings Chapter 5; Lanier and Henry Chapter 6

**Mar 25** Consultation of group research reflection projects via Zoom from 4:00 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. No formal lecture. Participation is optional. No need to make time appointment.

**Apr 1** University reading week, no lecture.

## **II Conflict Model**

**Apr 8** Marxist/Critical Criminology: Who defines crime and deviance?  
Green Criminology: Extension of Ecological Marxism

**Apr 15** Postmodern Criminology: Crime and deviance as a function of linguistic domination

Required readings: Akers, Sellers and Jennings Chapters 10 & 11; Vold, Bernard and Snipes Chapter 14

### **Explaining Victims of Crime**

**Apr 22** Victimology and Routine Activity Theory  
Who are more likely to be victims of crime?  
Do victims cause crime?  
In what ways does victimology transcend the pestilence fallacy of criminology?

Required readings: Daigle Chapter 1 (pp. 1-6); Akers, Sellers and Jennings Chapter 2 (pp. 32-43)

## **Final Grade Descriptors**

### **A Scoring 90-100**

- Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
- Demonstrate the ability to articulate and elaborate individual sociological theories of criminology introduced in the course.
- Able to fully interpret and compare the theoretical hypotheses, and to fully identify the interrelationships, among these sociological theories of criminology.
- Able to fully apply these sociological perspectives to analyze empirical criminal and deviant behaviors. Examine all relevant sociological arguments and connect their synthesis to empirical issues with a clear, well-organized, critical and cogent analytical framework.

### **A- Scoring 80-89**

- Generally outstanding performance on almost all learning outcomes.
- Demonstrate the ability to recall and elaborate individual sociological theories of criminology introduced in the course.
- Able to interpret and compare the theoretical hypotheses, and to identify the interrelationships, among these sociological theories of criminology.
- Able to apply these sociological perspectives to analyze empirical criminal and deviant behaviors. Connect most of the sociological arguments to empirical issues with a clear and well-organized analytical framework and with some signs of critical thinking.

### **B+ / B / B- Scoring 70-79**

- Substantial performance on all learning outcomes.
- Demonstrate the ability to recall relevant sociological theories of criminology introduced in the course.
- Able to partially interpret and compare the theoretical hypotheses, and to partially identify the interrelationships, among these sociological theories of criminology.
- Able to apply these sociological perspectives to analyze empirical criminal and deviant behaviors. Connect some sociological arguments to empirical issues with a comprehensible analytical framework in which reasoning is sometimes incomplete.

### **C+ / C / C- Scoring 60-69**

- Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
- Demonstrate the partial ability to recall pieces of sociological theories of criminology introduced in the course.
- Able to partially interpret the theoretical hypotheses of these sociological theories of criminology, without the ability to compare their theoretical constituents.
- Able to partially apply these sociological perspectives to analyze empirical criminal and deviant behaviors. Connect few sociological arguments to empirical issues with a somewhat confusing analytical framework in which reasoning is sometimes impaired by emotive, inconsistent or incomplete argumentation.

### **D Scoring 50-59**

- Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.
- Demonstrate the partial ability to recall some simple terms derived from sociological theories of criminology introduced in the course.
- Able to interpret few theoretical hypotheses of these sociological theories of criminology, without the ability to compare their theoretical constituents.
- Able to minimally apply these sociological perspectives to analyze empirical criminal and deviant behaviors. Connect few sociological arguments to empirical issues with a confusing or irrelevant analytical framework in which reasoning is often impaired by emotive, inconsistent or incomplete argumentation.

### **F Scoring below 50**

- Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, or failure to meet specified

assessment requirements.

- Unable to recall sociological theories of criminology introduced in the course.
- Unable to interpret and compare the theoretical hypotheses of these sociological theories of criminology.
- No application of these sociological perspectives to analyze empirical criminal and deviant behaviors. Only state personal and emotive opinions on empirical issues without sociological arguments.